

help Prime Minister Maliki build a free nation that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself. And we will help Iraq become a strong democracy that is a strong ally in the war on terror.

There is one thing we will not do: We will not pull our troops off the battlefield before the mission is complete. There are some in Washington who argue that retreating from Iraq would make us safer. I disagree. Retreating from Iraq would allow the terrorists to gain a new safe haven from which to launch new attacks on America. Retreating from Iraq would dishonor the men and women who have given their lives in that country and mean their sacrifice has been in vain. And retreating from Iraq would embolden the terrorists and make our country, our friends, and our allies more vulnerable to new attacks.

The last few weeks have been rough for our troops in Iraq and for the Iraqi people. The fighting is difficult, but our Nation has seen difficult fights before. In World War II and the cold war, earlier generations of Americans sacrificed so that we can live in freedom. This generation will do its duty as well. We will defeat the terrorists everywhere they make their stand, and we will leave a more hopeful world for our children and our grandchildren.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:30 p.m. on October 20 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 21. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 20 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; Maj. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV, spokesman, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Message on the Observance of Eid al-Fitr

October 20, 2006

I send greetings to Muslims in the United States and around the world celebrating Eid al-Fitr.

Islam is a great faith that has transcended racial and ethnic divisions and brought hope and comfort to many people. Throughout Ramadan, Muslims have fasted to focus their minds on faith and to direct their hearts to charity. Eid al-Fitr marks the completion of this holy month with the Festival of Breaking the Fast. During this joyous celebration, Muslims thank God for his guidance and blessings by gathering with family and friends, sharing traditional foods, and showing compassion to those in need.

America is strengthened by the countless contributions of our Muslim citizens, and we value our ties with Muslim nations throughout the world. For people of all faiths, Eid al-Fitr is an opportunity to reflect on the values we share and the friendships that bind all who trace their faith back to God's call to Abraham.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a joyous Eid and for health, happiness, and prosperity in the year ahead. Eid Mubarak.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 23. An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Remarks at Urban Trust Bank

October 23, 2006

The President. I want to thank Bob Johnson and Dwight Bush for hosting this meeting here at the Urban Trust Bank. I also want to thank Tim and Tony and Kathy for joining us. These are local entrepreneurs who are living the American Dream, which is, they've started their own businesses; they're growing their own businesses; they are hoping to expand and hire more people.

One of the great things about America is that somebody can start with nothing and end up with something when it comes to business. People can have a dream, and they can work hard to achieve that dream. And the role of government, it seems to me, is to make sure that the dreamers are rewarded for their hard work and their ingenuity and success. And the best way to do that is to reduce taxes on people. The more money a entrepreneur has in his or her pocket, the

more likely it is he or she will be able to expand that business, which will create jobs.

Government has got to be careful about the regulations it passes. We've got to be careful about the number of lawsuits that threaten these young companies. Government can do well at helping to team up with private corporations to enhance capital flows. But the strength of this economy depends upon the strength of the small-business sector.

We've added a lot of jobs since August of 2003—6.6 million new jobs. And that's a result of small businesses growing and expanding. I was just talking to Tim. He's got 30 employees. That's up from zero 5 years ago. It's really enlightening and encouraging for me to talk to these hard-working people.

One of the interesting things about our economy that's also important is that as the economy has grown, the real wages for American workers has increased. Last year it increased by 2.2 percent. That's the largest increase in recent years. And that's important, because not only does it mean the small businesses are doing well, it means our working families are doing as well.

And so I want to thank you, Bob, for letting me come by. Congratulations on the example you've set.

Robert L. Johnson. My pleasure, sir.

The President. Appreciate you very much.

Mr. Johnson. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:01 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Robert L. Johnson, founder and chairman, The RLJ Companies; Dwight L. Bush, president and chief executive officer, Urban Trust Bank; Timothy Sullivan, founder and chief executive officer, Fidelis Security Systems, Inc.; Tony Rome, president and chief executive officer, Maven Strategies; and Kathy Boden, president and chief executive officer, Bluehouse Water Solutions.

Remarks at a Reception for Congressional Candidate Vern Buchanan in Sarasota, Florida

October 24, 2006

Thank you all. I'm proud to be here. I appreciate you turning out—to give me a chance to say that Vern Buchanan is the right man to be the United States Congressman from the 13th Congressional District. He is smart; he is capable; he is successful; he shares your values; he loves his family; he practices his faith with sincerity. He's a decent, honorable man who deserves to be elected to the United States Congress.

And I want to thank you for helping him. I appreciate you coming out. It makes me feel good. I know it makes the Congressman-to-be feel good. But it gives us a chance to remind you that we're in the final stretches of this campaign. And he's been working hard, and his family has been working hard. And he's going to count on you to turn out the vote.

So I want to thank you in advance for what you're going to do, which is to find our fellow Republicans—to remind our fellow citizens we have an obligation to vote, and when you get them headed toward the polls, tell them if they want a country that's strong and an economy that's strong, send Vern Buchanan to Washington, DC.

I was pleased to meet Sandy and James and Matt—Sandy would be the wife—[laughter]—James and Matt, the sons. I told them how much I appreciated them supporting Vern for his run. I know what it's like to run for office, and it's important to have a wife and family stand with you. It can kind of get lonely out there on the campaign trail sometimes. And to have that strong family standing with him means a lot for this candidate.

I know what I'm talking about, because I married well, just like Vern married well. And Laura sends her love to our good friends down here in Florida. And we've got a lot of friends down here. As a matter of fact, I don't have a lot of friends down here—I've got some relatives down here. You know, Jeb and I share the same campaign consultant—[laughter]—our mother. [Laughter] And so for you little ones here, my advice